



**Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of
RMIT University
Advanced Diploma of Dental Prosthetics**

August 2021

Updated August 2022

1. Executive summary

Program provider	RMIT University
Program/qualification name	Advanced Diploma of Dental Prosthetics
Program/qualification abbreviation	Adv Dip Dent Pros
Program/qualification code	C6123 (National Code: HLT65015)
Head office address, including State	College of Vocational Education, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476 Melbourne VIC 3001
Campus	Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne
Program length	2 Years
Registration division	Dental Prosthetist
Registration specialty	NA
Qualification type	VET
Australian Qualifications Framework level	Level 6
Accreditation standards version	Accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs (Approved August 2020)
Date of site evaluation	3 – 4 August 2021
Date of ADC decision	12 August 2022
Type of accreditation	Re-Accreditation
Accreditation start date	1 January 2022
Accreditation end date	31 December 2026

Background

RMIT University's Advanced Diploma of Dental Prosthetics (ADDP) program was last reviewed by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) in 2016, at which time it was accredited for a period of five years subject to one condition. The condition related to vaccination and blood borne virus screening for students and was determined to have been met in December 2016.

The program is delivered in accordance with the requirements of the National Health Training Package HLT65015 Advance Diploma of Dental Prosthetics, which RMIT University was in the process of implementing at the time of the visit undertaken in 2016. The training package includes eleven core units, including the unit Construct and insert an implant retained overdenture and one elective unit.

Since the previous review was undertaken, RMIT University has been through a process of change regarding its internal structures and the ADDP program is now included within the new College of Vocational Education from January 2021. The program has also needed to adjust its delivery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a rapid shift to online learning to continue to deliver as a result of COVID safe restrictions imposed in Victoria. These changes have been reported to the ADC as part of the COVID-19 monitoring reporting process.

Overview of evaluation

An Accreditation Team (AT) received RMIT University's 45-page submission against the Accreditation Standards and various appendices.

The AT was scheduled to undertake a site visit to the Royal Dental Hospital Melbourne (RDHM) on 3 and 4 August 2021, but due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the review was undertaken virtually. Meetings were held over Zoom with the following:

- Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor, College of Vocational Education
- Associate Director
- Program Manager
- Program Co-ordinator
- Lead Teacher
- Permanent and casual academic staff
- Senior co-ordinator Work Integrated Learning and Placements
- Manager, Delivery Services
- Manager, Student Lifecycle
- Coordinator Student Services
- Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor Learning & Teaching
- Clinical staff from Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV)
- Vocational Education Reconciliation Advisor, Principal Advisor and Vocational Education College Sponsor Reconciliation
- Employers
- A representative of the Australian Dental Prosthetists Association (ADPA)
- First and second year students, and
- Recent graduates of the program

The AT was provided videos of the facilities within the RDHM as well as a demonstration of the Learning Management System (LMS).

During the review, the AT were provided with further documentation including Course Experience Survey (CES) Data, the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS) and additional information requested following the AT's teleconference held on 21 July 2021.

The findings of this report are based on the AT's assessment of the material outlined above and interview evidence.

Key findings

RMIT University's ADDP program has been severely impacted by COVID-19, due to restrictions placed on clinics within the RDHM. RMIT University has identified opportunities to enable students to continue their clinical education, by partnering with external clinics staffed by registered dental prosthetists. External placement opportunities can provide significant learning opportunities for students, but RMIT University must review the processes and policies it has put in place to ensure that these clinical placements are appropriate for student learning and meeting all regulatory and health and safety requirements for the provision of care.

RMIT University is reliant solely on the external supervisor being registered as a dental prosthetist and complying with regulatory requirements, but this may not be sufficient to ensure an appropriate learning experience for students or to provide external supervisors with the support and information required to supervise students. Additionally, this opportunity has not been made available to all students, which raises questions as to the equity of the student experience across cohorts.

The information gathered indicates that students are still completing the requirements of the training package, through a shift to online learning for didactic content, combined with the requirements to complete at least 240 hours of clinical practice. The variety and mix of cases completed by students is sufficient to produce a competent graduate.

Based on the evidence gathered by the AT, there is still significant work for the University to do to ensure students are provided with the opportunities needed to demonstrate they can provide culturally safe care, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There is mandated cultural safety training for RMIT staff, but this does not appear to be mandated for external supervisors or students. This must be addressed. RMIT University must undertake this work in a culturally safe way, with input from appropriately experienced staff to inform how this is incorporated at the program level. Further information will be required.

The AT acknowledges that there has also been significant change within the education provider regarding the internal structures, with the College of Vocational Education commencing operation from 1 January 2021. Information was provided showing how these structures will ensure appropriate oversight. There was some concern of the AT that, due to the move to more informal mechanisms of feedback from students, policies regarding quality improvement are not being implemented as indicated. Further information is required to provide reassurance that the formal evaluation mechanisms are effective. There is also a necessity for RMIT to consider how consumer feedback can be used to inform program design and management.

Assessments are based on the training package and are adequate. However, to strengthen the program, consideration should be given to reviewing how the assessment methodologies are used to ensure a depth of understanding and application of knowledge, as well as ensuring that a broad range of assessment methodologies are used. This will further enhance student readiness to work as a dental prosthetist.

ADC accreditation decision

The ADC has determined that RMIT University's Advanced Diploma of Dental Prosthetics program is reaccredited until **31 December 2026** subject to the following conditions:

- 1) To ensure Standard 1 – Public safety and Standard 3 – Program of study are met in full, RMIT University is required to provide evidence of the processes in place to ensure clinics offering external placements to students are appropriate and have robust health and safety, patient safety and quality, and care policies and processes in place. A report is to be provided by **30 April 2022** detailing how RMIT University ensures external clinics to be used for clinical placement are appropriate, including how RMIT University has determined that external supervisors have the knowledge and skills required to provide instruction and guidance to students.

The ADC has determined that this condition has been met.

- 2) To ensure Standard 2 – Academic governance and quality assurance is met in full, RMIT University is required to provide evidence by **30 September 2022** that formal processes for student feedback and quality improvement are being implemented as outlined in the relevant policies.
- 3) To ensure Standard 6 – Cultural safety is met in full, RMIT University will need to:
 - a. Provide evidence that all students and staff, including external supervisors, complete cultural safety awareness training appropriate to inform the safe delivery of health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Actions taken or implemented should be reported to the ADC by **30 June 2022**.
 - b. Advise of actions taken to embed external input into the design and management of the program from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Details of the actions taken, and how this input has been used to inform program delivery is to be provided by **30 June 2022**.
 - c. Identify opportunities for students to demonstrate their capability to provide culturally safe care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Evidence detailing how this outcome is to be achieved is required by **30 June 2022**.

The ADC has determined that this condition has been met.